Our Halloween Issue!

October 23, 2020
Issue #27

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

shining a light in the dark
MARVEL STAR SERIES
Little Book Of Spells
E PRENTISS.
Published by the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* during the Pandemic.

Photo by Paige Cody Unsplash

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

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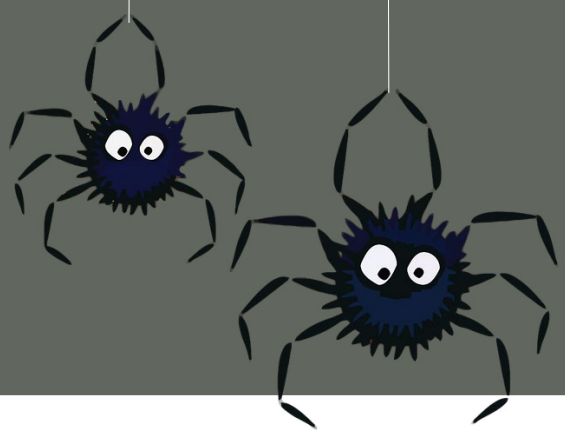
The Crazy Wisdom Weekly is looking for your submissions!

We want short stories, personal essays, gardening tips, reflections on life, your best recipies, or awesome wildlife or nature photos! Have a great joke? Send it in! We are also looking to feature local authors, writers, musicians, craftspeople, and artists. Have a great idea for a short article? Send in your article pitch! Submissions should be sent to: Jennifer@crazywisdom.net. Please put CW Weekly submission in the subject line. Articles should be no more than 1000 words.

We look forward to seeing your submissions!

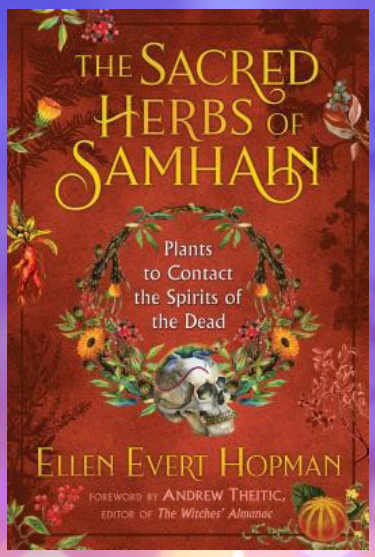


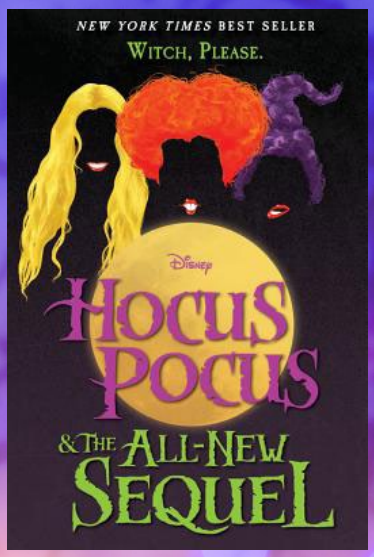
Crazy Wisdom Bookstore is open!

Monday - Saturday 11 - 7
Sunday 12 - 5

734.665.2757
crazywisdom.net

We are social distancing, wearing masks, and limiting the number of people in the store


THE SACRED HERBS OF SAMHAIN
Plants to Contact the Spirits of the Dead
ELLEN EVERT HOPMAN
FOREWORD BY ANDREW THEITIC, EDITOR OF The Witches' Almanac



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Please read our parent publication, *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. You can find online archives on our website, crazywisdomjournal.com. *The Crazy Wisdom Journal* has been published three times a year since 1995.

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Thank you to our contributors for this issue:

Moira Payne
Sarah Williams
Laura Cowan
Colin Carson
Carol Karr
Jennifer Carson
Bill Zirinsky

Word of the Week:

Evanescent

Soon passing out of sight, memory, or existence.

Born during the pandemic, *The Crazy Wisdom Weekly* seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. We welcome articles, interviews, recipes, wisdom, personal essays, breathing exercises, beautiful art and photos, favorite places for socially distant walks, news of your pets, or musings on current events. Send your submission to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

By Moira Payne

Her fingers glided easily over the silk of the deep red sari that she wore. Her lipstick matched the dress and contrasted with her short, trendy black hair. She left her three children at home with their nanny, as she was joining her husband at a close friend's house for a dinner party. She was looking forward to seeing her new friends that night, fellow spiritual seekers. She was in her early 20s and felt the entire world was within reach. They had lived in India for the past few years—a country that she fell deeply in love with. Unbeknownst to her social scientist husband, she had found meditation, vegetarianism, and had her first out-of-body experience.

At the party, her eyes settled on the old fortune teller. Although wrinkles covered her face, she was still beautiful. What captured her attention most was the fortune teller's necklace, which dangled close to her cleavage and had a glass container as a pendant. Inside the pendant was a giant spider, alive and moving, legs scratching against the glass. As she sat watching, she decided to hear her fortune. The old woman smiled and began to tell her of a life far away…and how she would die when she was 64.

The young woman was my mother, and this was her first experience with a psychic. This story occurred in the mid-60s and I was not yet born. As my mother would later tell me, she was deeply distressed after her reading. Months later, she would return to the States and think about that woman with her spider necklace pendant. One day, years later, while walking down a street in Los Angeles, she saw a sign for a palm reader. As she was without her children, she had some time and stepped inside. The palm reader asked her if she had any specific questions, and my mother told her that she wanted to know at what age she would die. The palm reader stared at her palm for some time and finally replied that she would die at the age of 64.

I remember learning about death in my single digit years. My mother would laugh and tell me how I asked, "You mean you won't always be here to hold my hand and take me for a walk?" When I asked her when *she* would die, she told me she was going to die at the age of 64. I remember thinking about it with despair, then deciding that when she was 64, I would be 35 and have my own family and maybe she would not mean the world to me.

For the next few decades, my three sisters and I would gather around our mother as she would tell us tales of living abroad, both before we were born and after. Vietnam, Switzerland, India. The tales of India, where she returned every year, would be the most animated and vivid. As we got older, her stories would become more focused on her spiritual awakenings there, and always, they would end with that psychic telling her she would die at the age of 64.

My sisters and I have followed life paths very different from our mother, and each other, yet each of us are, in our different ways, drawn to the world outside us— spiritually and culturally. Over the past two decades, I have explored many religious traditions. I quickly concluded that religions were too narrow and institutional for my comfort, but spirituality broadened my world. My mother was always there, sharing in our stories and challenging us to find our own truth. She was the healthiest person I knew, proudly saying that she had only ever been to the hospital to give birth. She wore no makeup, and she meditated every day for an hour—and had since she had left India decades before.

Finally, my mother turned 64. No one spoke of the psychic that she had gone to so long ago, but we all wanted that year to be over and to know that our beloved matriarch would be alive and well. I knew this without ever speaking of it to my sisters. I was 35 and had children of my own. I laughed at my younger self, thinking that even at my age, my mother was still my everything.

Read the rest of the story online

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

Hosted by Joe Kelty, Ed Morin, and David Jibson

Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Until further notice, all sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom.
Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Featured Readers:
Donovan Hohn and Natalie Bakopoulos

7:00 PM - 8:45 PM • Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Donovan Hohn is the author of *Moby-Duck: The True Story of 28,800 Bath Toys Lost at Sea*, a New York Times Notable Book and runner-up for two major awards. His essays appear in *Harper's, Lapham's Quarterly*, and *Best Creative Nonfiction*. He will read from *The Inner Coast: Essays*, published last June.

Natalie Bakopoulos is the author of two novels: *The Green Shore* and the recently published ***Scorpionfish***. Her work has appeared in Granta, The Iowa Review, Ploughshares, and O. Henry Prize Stories. She's an assistant professor at Wayne State University and faculty member of the summer program, Writing Workshops in Greece.

Featured reader is followed by Open Mic reading. • FREE. All writers welcome • Read your own or other favorite poetry. • Sign up begins 6:45 p.m. • Poetry Series readings every fourth Wednesday hosted by Joe Kelty, Ed Morin, & Dave Jibson. See our blog at cwcircle.poetry.blog.

THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL
SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN'S CONSCIOUS LIVING MAGAZINE
FREE
SEPTEMBER THROUGH DECEMBER 2020 - ISSUE 75
25th Anniversary Issue
Leading Lights from the Community (and from our previous covers) Came Together on the Eve of the Pandemic to Help Us Celebrate
From left to right: Bill Zirinsky, Linda Diane Feldt, Brian O'Donnell, Bronwen Gates, Lev Linkner, Cathy King, Haju Sunim, Richard Mann, Larissa Czuchnowsky and her son, Isaac Levey
Sandor Slomovits on the Legacy Land Conservancy • The Grit Behind the Grange (Restaurant) • Hidden Gems: Green Spaces You Might Not Know About • Yin Feminism • Sandy Finkel and Dennis Chernin on Stepping Out of their Comfort Zones • Kintsugi and the Art of Healing the Broken Heart • Saved by the Squirrels • Psychotherapist Marcia Haarer • Kokopelli's Corner • Conscious Parenting • Great Tastes • Yoga Column • And More

Don't miss the 25th anniversary issue of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* on newsstands now and also online!

Comfort Food

Scare up these yummy Halloween hand pies that are cute enough for even the grumpiest of little witches!

By Jennifer Carson

Dough Ingredients:
2 Cups flour
4 TBSP superfine or baker's sugar (you can also use table sugar and crush it with a mortar and pestle)
1 Cup cold salted butter (cut into pats)
1/2 Cup of ice cold water

For Apple Filling:
3-4 Gala apples
1/4 Cup water
1/4 Cup sugar
1-1/4 tsp. Cinnamon

You'll also need:
1 Egg
1/4 Cup brown sugar

For the dough, combine the flour and sugar and whisk together. Add the chilled pats of butter and cut in with a pastry cutter or your fingers until the mixture looks like coarse breadcrumbs. Slowly add the cold water and stir as you go, just until the dough begins to clump together. Turn out on a floured surface and gather into a ball. Wrap in parchment paper and chill in refrigerator for 20 minutes. You can also leave it overnight if you want to prepare it the day before!

For the filling, peel, core, and slice the apples. Cook apples with 1/2 cup water. When apples are fork soft drain any excess water. Mix sugar with cinnamon and then add to apples. Stir and cook just a few minutes until carmelized.

Preheat oven to 395 degrees. Roll dough out on a floured surface, to 1/4" thick. Using a pumpkin cookie cutter (or a knife and a stencil) cut out an even number of pumpkin shapes. With a knife, cut jack-o-lantern faces in 1/2 of your pumpkins.

Spoon about 1 TBSP of apple filling onto the other half of the pumpkin cut outs. Place the jack-o-lantern pumpkins on top. Carefully seal the edges by pressing the top pumpkin edge down into the bottom pupmkin edge. Place pumpkins on a lined baking sheet. Scramble egg in a small bowl and brush pumplkin tops with egg. Sprinkle tops with brown sugar. Bake for 20-25 minutes. Serve warm.

The Rookie

A Short Story by
Colin Carson

The small town of Vanderfield came into view as I peeked over the crest of the hill. Nestled between rolling slopes, straw topped houses were corralled by a lazy river. The remainder of the company of soldiers paused alongside me. A gentle breeze swirled through my unruly hair and brought a freshness to the damp odor that clung to us from our long march from King's Crossing.

As a new recruit I hadn't gotten to meet many of my counterparts, and the quick pace we'd been walking prevented most amiable conversation. The one face I did recognize, the captain of our unit, paid me no mind as he surveyed our surroundings.

"Squadron, Halt!" he bellowed. His command was most unnecessary as we had all but dropped our packs already.

My mother named me Rook before she died, and when the Captain had asked for my name he misheard me and thought I wanted him to address me as Rookie. Or maybe he just liked the word play of it and thought himself clever. Either way, I was informed to refer to him merely as Captain and never did get his name.

I'd joined the company at King's Crossing, a small stronghold built to levy taxes on travelers moving through the mountain pass. I'd grown up in the cave system around the area, living mostly in isolation, though I'd visited many towns on both sides of the mountain, trading what little I found in order to survive. I always thought the life of a soldier would be easier than my own, and had finally decided to beg the Captain for admittance. If i'd only known how wrong I was, I would never have given up my simple existence.

The captain cleared his throat. "Davey and Rin, head back to the forest and gather some wood. Tandry and Spauld, take positions to the east. Badger and Fraun, to the west. I want sharp eyes tonight, boys! No drinking or slacking off. Three hour shifts until morning light. The rest of you set up camp, plan for three days, but I expect we'll be here longer."

There was an audible groan as Captain paused to take a breath. I sprawled myself out on the ground, staring into the waning light of the sky, and picturing tiny people eating tiny corn in the village below.

"Don't forget why we're here," the captain interrupted my musing with a swift kick to the ribs. The surprise I felt at the sudden abuse prolonged the pain that had exploded in my side.

The Captain's eyes met mine. "I'll need bright shining faces in the morning to gather supplies from the village. Don't get too comfortable either, Rookie. We've gotten some gruesome reports from people passing through these woods. Things so terrifying, just imagining them will stop you in your tracks."

Still recovering from the sudden kick I whimpered a bit as I stood up.

"Yes sir, Captain, sir," I replied. He held me in his gaze for a long moment. Then, laughing, he turned his attention to setting up camp with the rest of the men. I must have looked worried because a fellow soldier, just a bit older than me, put a hand on my shoulder.

"Don't worry about the ghost stories," he said in a gruff whisper. "It's the people you've got to worry about." With that he walked away with a chuckle.

"It must be pick-on-the-rookie day," I muttered under my breath. I didn't think much of his comment. People had been my enemies my entire life. I resented the rest of the squad for their jovial demeanors at my expense. Sighing, I rubbed my side where the captain's boot had made purchase, and got to work myself. By the time camp was set, the stars were clear and the fire was warm, even at the distance from which I sat.

***

I woke to hushed tones. Feigning sleep, my ears perked up to the deep tones of a fellow soldier. Badger and Fraun apparently hadn't reported back, and the two soldiers sent to replace them

found no trace of the pair. The captain ordered replacements, and three other men to do a sweep of the area. I assumed Badger and Fraun had probably disobeyed orders, got drunk, and lost in the unfamiliar woods.

"Rookie," the captain barked, snapping me out of my pretend sleep. "I know you're awake. I was going to have you take the next watch at the camp but, seeing as how you're already raring to go, how about you make yourself useful and head to the village. I've already sent most of the squad to collect supplies. I'm sure they'll be grateful for the extra hands."

I quickly dressed. Breakfast had been sitting in the pot by the fire for too long and it was even mushier than usual. By the time I made it down the hill the morning fog had dispersed and the warm rays of light trickling in energized me. As I approached the villagers seemed awfully quiet. They kept to their homes. Some even closed their shutters as I walked down the cobblestoned road. As I rounded the corner of the main street, I discovered why.

Broken glass littered the street, some of my fellow soldiers were holding the vendors hostage while the rest looted the stalls and shops, shoving produce, smoked meat, and bread into burlap sacks. One man lay in a bloody pile, his face smashed to pulp. I stared at the scene before me, a little incredulous. Obviously, I knew this was the kind of thing soldiers did, but somehow, I had thought the squadron I'd been assigned to would be better than this.

A pretty girl, who must have been as oblivious to the inner workings of the King's Army as I was, broke through the crowd, saw the broken man, and screamed. The closest soldier, rough-looking and scarred, I think they called him Mack, grabbed her by the arm and dragged her away. "Wait," I interjected, pushing through the crowd and grabbing his uniform. "We aren't here for that. Let her go and help me bring back these sacks."

He laughed in a half grunt. "Whatever you say, Rookie." Before letting the girl go he turned her face aggressively toward him. "I'll be back for you," he threatened and licked his lips. The second he dropped her arm she quickly ran away. Mack turned back to me. "You'll learn. Life on the road is hard as it gets. You've got to take the opportunities when you get 'em." He slapped my shoulder and bent over to pick up a sack, laying three or four across his back before heading out of town. The whole encounter left me cold, and a bit queasy.

The captain gave us new orders the second we made it back to camp. We were to join the scouting party for Badger and Fraun. It didn't take us long to catch up with the rest of the company. They were sitting around playing cards and drinking. They didn't seem to be taking the search too seriously.

Mack's finger's clenched and he cursed them out under his breath. "We don't have time for cavorting! No one wants to search these woods all day looking for a pair of slackers. Get a move on!" Mack moved through the soldiers, picking one up by the collar and plopping him on his feet. He clapped his hands together and continued to the front of the throng.

So it was that when a tall , specter of a man wearing a tattered black suit, that seemed to be held together by drab-colored patches, slinked into the clearing, Mack was the first in line to meet him. The company immediately took formation with weapons drawn. "Come no closer, stranger!" Mack warned.

"Tsk tsk. I'm no stranger to you, Mack." The specter's face transformed as he spoke. His jaw hung limp, as if unhinged. His eyes exploded from their sockets, blood spraying the soldiers closest to him. Slowly, unmistakably, his face mimicked first Fraun's, then Badger's. The specter's lips, still wearing the face of our fellow soldier, curled into a wide beaming grin. Mack scrambled backward, as a burst of light erupted from the spirit.

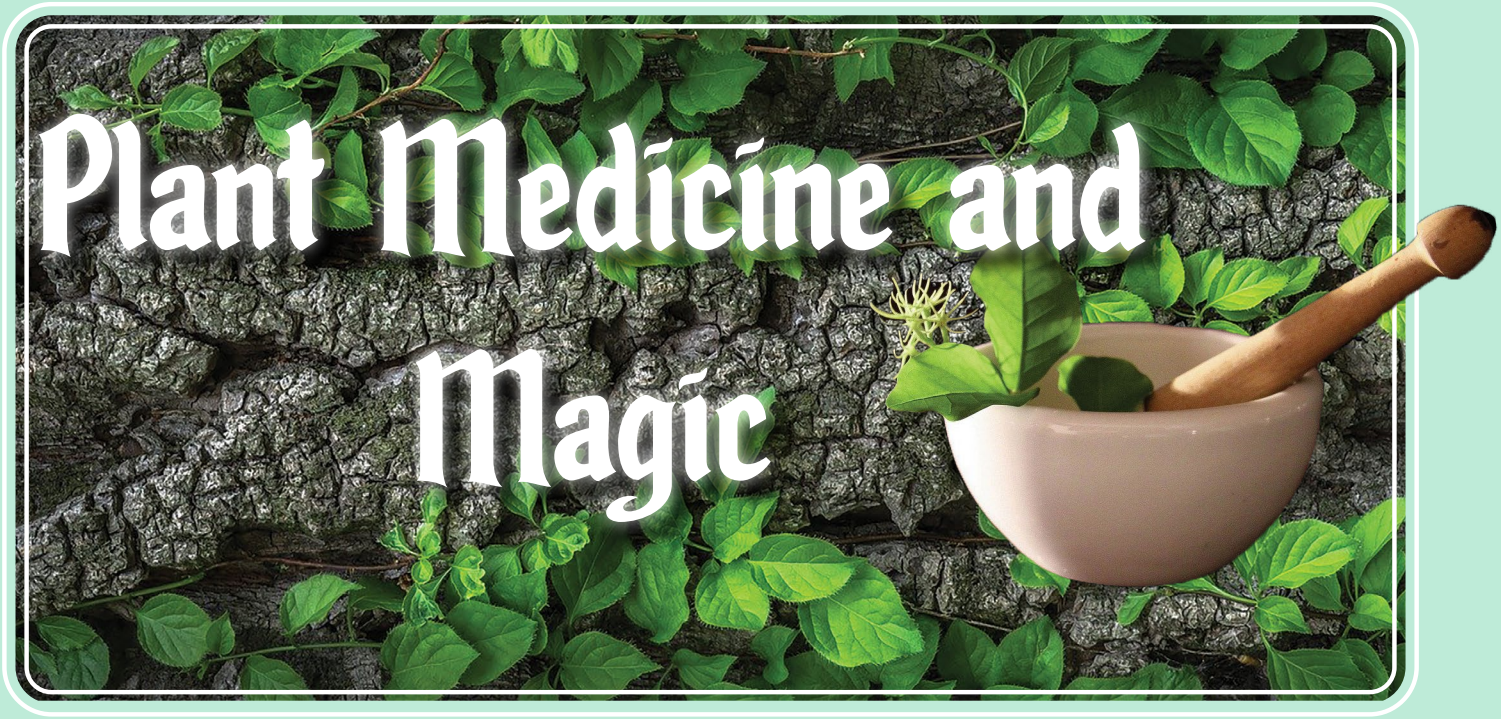
Clearly though the man looked human at first, he wasn't. I dropped to the ground and curled into a ball, rolling as tightly as I could against the roots of a tree, hoping it couldn't see me. I squeezed my eyes shut, but it didn't seem to matter. The specter hadn't lifted a finger, or moved an inch, but whether it was fear that killed my company, or if the creature had ripped their souls from their bodies, their deaths were swift. The bark of the tree I took shelter in carved lines into my forehead as I prayed for the screaming to stop. Hearing no more commotion I opened my eyes and peered around the tree in time to see the creature's horribly long tongue lash at Mack's body. I could only assume it was tasting him.

The sound of gluttonous, wicked delight echoed through my head, as if it originated from my own throat. I quivered in the ecstasy of it, my legs going limp. I tasted tears as a wide smile stretched the aching corners of my mouth. One by one soldiers took their turns with the specter, frozen in place and wearing the same smile that felt etched into my own face. The creature took his time picking at them, letting them slowly melt in his mouth, the pleasure increasing with every lash of it's tongue. Though their flesh wasn't devoured, the bodies shriveled away, leaving only dust. I experienced some sort of satisfaction at watching the last remnants of life drain from the bodies of the other soldiers. I should've tried to run, but the sickly sweet pleasure of overwhelming power rooted me to the spot.

I found myself laughing maniacally. My hands had been gripping the tree so hard blood trickled from my fingernails. Any hope I'd had of concealing myself had vanished. I was already dead. There was no point in hiding. I could only watch as it stalked toward me. The moment it was done however, the feelings emanating from the specter, and through me, changed. It seemed taken aback at my presence. Then the tall man that had come into the clearing just minutes ago once again stood before me. His already worn suit now hung off of him, exposing a large muscular frame. I collapsed to the ground as a surge of peace and calm flowed into me.

He lifted me off the ground, cradling my head against his shoulder. His soft bared skin and gentle demeanor are all I recall of the journey back into the village. Only now, as I sit here in this bed, surrounded by the villagers who found me on the outskirts of town, are the words he whispered to me clear.

"Whether you sink or float, all men must cross the waters of the In-Between. Keep your burden light, and we shall never have cause to meet again."



By Sarah Williams

When people ask what drew me to herbalism, there are two stories that I tell. One is of my time working in the Mojave desert, where my boss—a botanist by training—would point out various native plants and tell me snippets of how the indigenous people of the area used them for food or medicine (he always spoke of this in the past tense). For him, it was an interesting tidbit of information, but I thought, "couldn't we still?" This story is true, but the deeper truth goes back many years, to my childhood.

Unlike some herbalists, I didn't grow up roaming the woods and fields, learning plant medicine at my grandmother's knee. We lived in a modest city neighborhood, and while my parents gardened and took us to the parks, the plants that surrounded us remained largely an anonymous green backdrop of our daily lives. Tomatoes and tulips were about the extent of our botanical knowledge or interest.

But in the evenings, as we settled in for bed, my dad would tell us stories. Most often, he would read to us from the great fantasy epics of the time: *The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings,* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. I would listen, enthralled, as he described dryads dancing in the moonlight, journeys through strange lands, navigating by rivers and ancient ruins, kings curing a deadly affliction with a wild-growing plant, animals that spoke words of wisdom or warning, elves that sang to the stars and remembered the making of mountains. I couldn't have said, at the time, why these images exerted such a strong pull on my young psyche. I only knew that they warmed my heart and made me feel both hopeful and fearless.

The years passed, and I outgrew bedtime stories. I earned my degree, started a career, and bought a house. I was a proper adult—life was perhaps less whimsical than it had been, but I was secure and reasonably content. And then one day, I picked up a copy of Herb Quarterly that someone had left lying on a table. It didn't take long for me to be drawn in. I had always loved nature, and studied it scientifically, but this was something different. It was somehow familiar—this easy, practical intimacy with plants and the natural world. As I read, immersing myself in each article, I felt the awakening of an old feeling: joy and hope and courage and a powerful curiosity. It was the feeling of magic that those stories had stirred in me years ago—the feeling that I had thought must be left behind with the innocence of childhood.

They held great power and seemingly limitless possibility, drawn not from their own cleverness or strength (though they had those too), but from their deep understanding of—and relationship with—the natural world.

Looking back, I can see why the characters in those tales fascinated me so. They held great power and seemingly limitless possibility, drawn not from their own cleverness or strength (though they had those too), but from their deep understanding of—and relationship with—the natural world. In respectful partnership with the earth itself, the plants and animals, they could never be truly lost or defeated, nor were they ever alone. Now, here was that same magic in real life, available to each of us so long as we are willing to listen and learn. This, I believe, is a large part of the healing that herbal medicine offers us, as individuals and as a people—the power of connection, the power of belonging in the world.

Of course, there are strictly physical, biochemical aspects as well that are quite important and worth knowing. As conventional medicine becomes less accessible for many, not to mention fraught with errors, knowing how to tend to our own health is a valuable skill. However, the practice of herbalism encompasses so much more. The root of much of what plagues us is loneliness, helplessness, and fear. The reasons that these are so

While we appreciate the lessons of the age of enlightenment, our souls long for the wonder and wild knowing that somehow got left along the way.

prevalent in our society are many and varied, and beyond the scope of this essay, but we are now, it seems, at the turning of the tide.

We have grown weary of separation, and discovered the limitations of rationalism. While we appreciate the lessons of the age of enlightenment, our souls long for the wonder and wild knowing that somehow got left along the way. Herbalism is one path by which we may find this again. The same part of us that remembers the magic of moonlight and stories around campfires, remembers the plants as food and medicine, yes, as well as companions and caretakers for uncounted generations. The old traditions of healing not only soothe our bodies and minds, they connect us to our ecosystems, to our ancestors, and not least, to each other. Our community, though growing, is still small, and we know how precious each kindred spirit is. We cherish the culture of integrity and care and are grateful to be among healers. As together we rediscover the magic of our world, and our own innate potential within it, we are finding our way toward completeness. As the elders now say, the plants are calling us home.

Sarah Williams has been studying and practicing plant medicine for the past 15 years. She is a wildcrafter, gardener, clinician, teacher, potion-maker and—always—a student. She is the herbalist behind Willow Moon Botanicals in Toledo, OH and a founding organizer of the Great Lakes Herb Faire. Find more information about the Great Lakes Herb Fair at greatlakesherb-faire.org. Visit Williams online at willowmoonbotanicals.weebly.com or email her at sarah17.williams@gmail.com.

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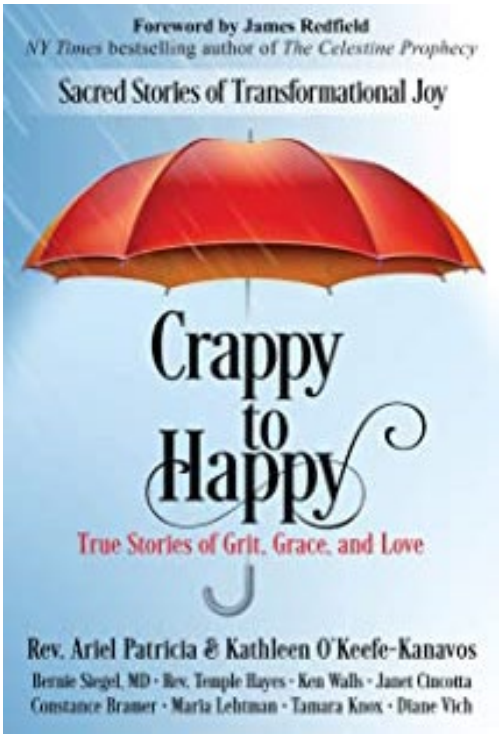
Crazy Wisdom Book Pick of the Week


Foreword by James Redfield
NY Times bestselling author of The Celestine Prophecy
Sacred Stories of Transformational Joy
Crappy to Happy
True Stories of Grit, Grace, and Love
Rev. Ariel Patricia & Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos
Bernie Siegel, MD · Rev. Temple Hayes · Ken Walls · Janet Cincotta
Constance Bramer · Marla Lehman · Tamara Knox · Diane Vich

Crappy to Happy: True Stories of Grit, Grace, and Love by Rev. Ariel Patricia and Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos

Into every life, some rain must fall. Fortunately, no storm lasts forever.

Do bad things happen to good people, or could the difficulties we face be gifts in disguise? You decide as thirty courageous authors share their poignant true stories with you.

Walk alongside the writers as they weather the storms of gender and sexual identity, crises of faith, divorce, addiction, health challenges, lost love, and more. Find inspiration for your future as you gain deeper insight into the meaning of life's challenges.

Purchase your copy of Crappy to Happy at shopcrazywisdom.com.

Double, Double, Toil and Trouble:

The Appeal of Witchcraft and Paganism in the Modern Era

By Laura Cowan

You see it in Newsweek, CNN, and other news websites that report on spirituality and esoteric culture like Quartz and Gaia. You see it through phenomena such as Instagram's 300k+ subscriber feed to Hoodwitch, Youtube's explosive growth of tarot readers, and gray or shamanic witches offering online tutorials and looks into their family traditions of Celtic witchcraft, and Wiccan seasonal ceremonies. Wicca, witchcraft, and paganism have long had an important perch within Crazy Wisdom Bookstore's book sections, and local Wiccans, witches, and pagans have long been written about in The Crazy Community Wisdom Journal, but all these related areas are experiencing exponential growth, both locally in earth-religion-friendly Ann Arbor and on the national scale. It is not difficult to join witchcraft groups on social media or find books on the topic, which have also had enormous popularity growth in recent years. Everything from reading runes to Christian witchcraft (a path in which people often believe in Christianity's tenets of love and forgiveness but also practice magic to venerate nature and don't believe the Bible's historic ban on witchcraft applies to working with light or natural healing manifesting energies but rather harmful workings) is on the shelves and easily accessible today to inquiring minds.

Recently a Pew Research study estimated 1.5 million Americans identify as Wiccans, which is the religion sometimes associated with witchcraft that involves venerating the earth through worship of a male and female god and goddess aspect. This means there are now more Wiccans in America than mainline Presbyterians, and that's just the beginning. This number does not take into account the many witches and pagans who are not Wiccan at all. In fact the only thing seeming to grow faster than Wicca in the U.S. is the variety of types of paganism or witchcraft.

Witchcraft, which is the practical side to using natural energies to cast spells for manifestation, and tarot card readings have become so popular among young people that beauty retailer Sephora recently drew fire for selling a "starter witch kit" for dabblers, offending the increasing number of serious witches in American culture. Facebook groups for witches, Wiccans, and pagans of every stripe are now often very public and very large. It's not hard to find a discussion online any given day about the Rule of Three, which some, but not all, witches abide by to govern their magic. The Rule of Three means that what you put into the world you get back three-fold, so watch what you do and create positive karma and workings, not ones that harm others. It's not hard to explain how Evangelical Christianity jumped the shark in American culture in recent years by siding with toxic political candidates, or how Catholicism has suffered under the burden of the priest pedophile scandals, but the witchcraft movement is unexpected to a lot of people, especially those who were taught that witches and tarot card readers work with demons.

For many, from aging hippies and baby boomers who are still young at heart to the millennials looking for a spiritual path to replace the decline of Christianity, witchcraft has proven an unexpectedly intuitive choice for continuing along a spiritual path of personal growth without the baggage of out-of-date theology or the dogmatic rule of religious traditions. It seems to be that the freedom and eclectic nature of modern witchcraft itself is the draw. Witchcraft isn't one thing. It isn't even a dozen things. And as mentioned before, witchcraft in particular can combine with other religions, so often witchcraft has the appeal of being a stepping stone into other spiritual studies without a person having to abandon another path whose traditions are important to them.

Many people say that it is problematic to paste together a hodgepodge of beliefs and traditions, which in some ways had to be done to rediscover Druidic paganism after the traditions were destroyed during the Roman occupation of the Celtic lands. For a generation that feels more comfortable following what feels true to them, this is also part of the draw. Right or wrong, or somewhere in between, as is usually the case with any movement, this trend toward choosing your own spirituality is on the rise. Because people within witchy circles are so eclectic, running the gamut from witches who have traditions passed down in families to pagans who are recreating ancient Celtic or other cultural seasonal ceremonies to commune with nature, the easiest way to understand the growth of witchcraft and paganism is not to sort it out end to end, which takes years of research, but to hear people's stories from within the movements. I pursued some time with three people who were generous enough to give me a peek into their world, two of whom are local to the Ann Arbor area and one I met online in mystical circles.

Spirituality of any kind is a journey and a voluntary one. So, I hope that the following interviews don't do the impossible task of answering all your questions or convincing you what to think about any spiritual tradition, but rather provoke more questions.

Read the interviews with Glenda Bartell, Rob Henderson, and Diane Horton!

The Crazy Wisdom weekly Calendar

Animal Communication

Basic Animal Communication • November 21 • 9 a.m. • Learn to communicate with animals the way they communicate with each other, telepathically. In a nurturing environment, you will learn step-by-step how to calm your mind to allow your natural telepathic skills to blossom and to connect with animal minds. This is a two-day online class that goes from 9am-4pm each day, November 21-22, 2020. Pre-requisite: read Animal Talk, by Penelope Smith. Fee is $150/$120 if paid by November 7, 2020. For more information contact Judy Ramsey at 734-665-3202 or email Judy at ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com . You can also learn more online.

Channeling

Remembering Wholeness - Darshan with The Mother • October 25 • 2 p.m Energy sharing (darshan) with The Mother channeled through Barbara Brodsky. Darshan is an event in consciousness – as The Mother looks into his/her eyes there is an interaction between the human and the divine, which focuses and draws up the consciousness of the human. Each person receiving a personal message from The Mother. Online via Zoom. For more information email om@deepspring.org or visit deepspring.org/evenings-with-aaron-fall2020.

Kabbalah

Kabbalah for Couples • November 8 • 3 p.m. This is not couples therapy. This is for basically good relationships that both parties are willing to work on, to make their relationship even better, physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, spiritually, and energetically. This two-hour session (rather than one hour), one time per month, for about a year, can help you get your relationship to the place that you always wanted it to be but did not know how. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit their website, clair-ascension.com.

Online Workshops

D.O.V.E. Divine Original Vibration Embodiment System Training (Karen Greenberg's Clair-Ascension Kabbalistic Balance) • November 6 • 10 a.m. • After studying D.O.V.E. System manual, learning to identify and repattern client's limiting beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, and patterns, and assisting client in expressing any commensurate low-vibrational emotions, through the Tree of Life, learn to Kabbalistically balance client's energy via art, movement, music, toning, sound, aromatherapy, gemstones, sacred symbols, connecting with G-D, Archangels, Angels, Masters of Light, trees, powerful Archetypes, and more. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit their website, clair-ascension.com.

Connecting with Archangels • October 25 • 6 p.m. • Become acquainted with the various Archangels represented in the Sephirot (Spheres) in the Tree of Life. Learn who the Archangels are, what they each do, on whom to call for particular assistance, and how to safely call upon them. Connect , ask Questions, often receive helpful information. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit their website, clair-ascension.com.

Weekly Zohar (The Book of Radiance) Study • October 25, November 1, November 8 • 8 p.m. • Explore the hidden and mystical meanings concealed in the Old Testament (Torah); deepen your spiritual knowledge, awareness, consciousness, and connection. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit their website, clair-ascension.com.

Creating Personalized Bath Collection • October 25 • 2p.m. • Choose from a massive collection of essential oils to create your own personalized bath collection to take home, to awaken, to believe in yourself, to help move you closer toward your life's purpose, for purity, for clarity, to envision, for inspiration, to surrender, for acceptance, for hope, for joy, for gratitude, for humility, for courage, for love, for clearing, for energy, for creativity, and for abundance. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit their website, clair-ascension.com.

Connecting with Various G-D Names/Aspects: Heavenly Travel • November 1 • 6 p.m. • Learn to astral travel safely to the planets associated with the Ten Sephirot (Spheres) in the Tree of Life, to become more deeply acquainted with ten different aspects of G-D. Learn how to connect to the energy of each different aspect of G-D, and the special quality that it represents. You may receive invaluable messages and/or answers to compelling questions. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit their website, clair-ascension.com.

MONTHLY Midrash Study • November 6 • 6 p.m. • The written version of the Old Testament (Torah) tells a story. What has been passed down orally for thousands of years is the backstory and

various mystical, hidden meanings. It is rich, colorful, detailed, and compiles interesting data like who ascended to Heaven alive, who was so righteous that their deceased bodies never decomposed, the seven things that we are not permitted to know in human form. For more information call Karen Greenberg at (734) 417-9511 or email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit their website, clair-ascension.com.

Shamanism

Basic Journeying: The Art of Shamanism for Practical and Visionary Purposes in Daily Life • November 7 • 9 a.m. • The shamanic journey is an easy and powerful tool we can use to access spiritual information. In this class you will meet and begin to develop a relationship with a compassionate spirit or power animal who is coming forward to help you at this time in your life. You will learn techniques to help you develop a self-directed practice of empowerment, allowing you to move safely, intentionally through the world in a balanced way.This class is a prerequisite to ongoing and more advanced shamanic studies. This is a two-day class online from 9am-3pm each day, November 7-8, 2020. Fee is $150/$120 if paid by October 24, 2020. For more information contact Judy Ramsey at 734-665-3202 or email Judy at ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com . You can also learn more online.

Writing and Poetry

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series • October 28 • 7 p.m. • Poetry Reading. Featured readers: Donovan Hohn and Natalie Bakopoulos. Followed by open mic. Email: cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for more information. Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

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